



Manufacturer of the Year Summit & Awards Luncheon

Friday, May 20, 2011

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Thank you, and good morning, everyone.

You know, for those of us who believe in the spirit of free enterprise ...

– For those of us who believe in a vibrant business community ...

– For those of us who believe in the greatness of Arizona manufacturing ...

-- And, for those of us who believe in THE FUTURE OF THIS STATE ...

These last few months have been pretty good to us, haven't they?

And, you know as well as I do, the progress that we've made together, didn't just happen.

It was because we worked side by side – not always in agreement – but side by side -- giving strength to common sense, and demonstrating our faith in the power of freedom.

Let me take a moment to say how much I've appreciated the efforts of Arizona Manufacturers Council Chairman Steve Macias ...

-- Past AMC Chairman -- and incoming Chamber Chairman Mark Dobbins ...

-- The president and CEO of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Glenn Hamer ...

-- And, its Chairman, Reg Ballantyne.

Thank you, gentlemen, for all you've done on behalf of Arizona manufacturing – job creation -- AND job retention.

All of Arizona is grateful for your dedication and we all applaud your hard work and the success it's brought us.

Following the announcement of my four main cornerstones of reform in January – you should know them by heart by now:

- Economic Competitiveness,
- Education,
- State Government,
- and Renewed Federalism ...

We embarked on a legislative session that will be remembered as one of the most productive and efficient in state history.

Thanks to the hard work of President Pearce and Speaker Adams -- and thanks to the support of the Arizona Manufacturers Council, the Arizona Chamber -- and probably most of you in this room – I was able to sign into law the FIRST of my Four Cornerstones -- The Arizona Competitiveness Package.

And, it was QUITE a package, wasn't it?

It was filled with long-needed tools for Arizona manufacturers.

It included codification of the Arizona Commerce Authority as a highly focused, highly privatized entity -- with a deal closing fund that our competitor states have.

Let me just take a minute to mention a few things that I think you and I have celebrated together –

- The bill phases in a 100 percent sales factor – which is good for the manufacturing community because it encourages businesses that sell goods beyond the state's borders.

Without the 100 percent sales factor, a company with a large manufacturing presence here -- but doesn't sell much in the state -- still could face a hefty tax liability.

-- The bill phases down the corporate income tax rate.

Arizona will have the second lowest rate in the nation among states with a corporate income tax rate when the law is fully implemented.

-- The bill phases down the commercial and industrial property assessment ratio from 20 percent to 18 percent over four years beginning in the tax year 2013.

We all know that high business property taxes are job-killers and they discourage expansion.

We've now turned Arizona into a haven for job creators, and that, my friends, deserves a round of applause.

And, speaking of a pro-jobs labor environment ... I signed into law a labor reform package that allows workers' union dues to terminate at the same time as their exit from a union.

The old rules were like a bad health club membership, where the union could keep deducting dues even after the worker left the union.

I signed into law a paycheck protection bill, which ensures that a union's OPERATING dues are segregated from their POLITICAL dues – and the new law also allows an employee to prevent their dues from going toward political activities.

I continued my commitment to an improved regulatory environment -- by signing a bill that increases transparency for businesses that are hit with violation notices by regulators.

You know as well as I do, that regulators had a habit of issuing violation notices to businesses but NOT making clear which rule or regulation had actually been violated, increasing red tape for companies that then had to figure out where they went wrong.

We've also given a helping hand to Arizona's defense and aerospace industry by signing into law legislation that ensures an aircraft sold to a foreign government but that remains in Arizona -- for example, for training purposes -- will not be subject to the transaction privilege tax.

I signed a bill that allows employers to move workers under the influence of prescription drugs – like medical marijuana -- OUT of safety sensitive positions.

The new law makes clear what is meant by “impairment” and employers can sanction employees for being impaired by medical marijuana.

Earlier, I mentioned the Arizona Commerce Authority and its commitment to growing base industries.

Let me add here that one of its areas of concentration is renewable energy.

This new focus enhances economic development opportunities and encourages business relocation, incubation and development along with supply chain growth around renewable energy.

And it’s already working -- several companies have already announced plans to headquarter or expand in Arizona.

One of these companies, Gestamp Solar Steel USA, announced it will base its United States headquarters in Surprise, employing approximately 300 high-skilled workers at full build-out.

Gestamp Solar Steel was drawn to Arizona by our Renewable Energy Program -- our favorable business climate -- and the state’s growing renewable energy market.

It will support the development of large-scale solar energy projects nationwide and the facility will be constructed on 27 acres of land in the *Skyway Business Park*.

And, we’ve announced First Solar Manufacturing Company -- its headquarters located in Tempe -- will expand its presence in Arizona with a large technology campus in Mesa -- meaning an even more significant investment in Arizona.

The Arizona Competitiveness Package also changed the Energy Office, which was once housed within the Commerce Department, and is now an independent department in the Governor’s office.

This change allows me to focus more intently on statewide energy policy, including the need for more nuclear and renewable energy.

Through the new Governor’s Energy Office, I’m also leading efforts to ensure that Arizona’s investment of energy funds reaps the benefits we expect and deserve.

Let me close by, again, thanking you for being wonderful teammates as we battled our way back -- making this the great Arizona Comeback, because you -- like me -- have a deep love for this state.

Your support has meant more to me than you will know.

Yes, we still have miles to go, before we sleep – we have PROMISES to keep -- and, with Providence by our side, we will keep those promises.
But, the ARIZONA SIGNAL FIRE has been REKINDLED.

I believe the light from that fire shines for all to see – and it says to the world -- we're here, we're open for business -- we're ready for our Second Century.

May God bless you and your families, and our Great State of Arizona.

And may God always bless and protect the United States of America.

Thank you.